

a first pipeline stage [(10)] for receiving said first set of requests and satisfying at least [some] one of the first set of requests;

[and characterized by further comprising:]

priority mixer means [(13)] for determining a further set of said requests, the further set [being composed of those] including requests of said first set which were not satisfied[,] and [of] requests [among] included in said plurality of requests which were not part of said first set [and which are of any of said priority levels]; and

an additional pipeline stage [(11)] for identifying requests in said further set which can be satisfied, and for satisfying the identified requests.

2. (Amended) Scheduling means according to claim 1 [in which] wherein said determination means at any time determines said first set of requests [to have] as having the same priority level[, which] and wherein said priority level is a selected priority level.

3. (Amended) Scheduling means according to claim 2 [in which] wherein the determination means varies the selected priority level with time, and wherein the proportion of time for which the selected priority level takes each of said predetermined number of priority levels [being according to] is a respective predetermined proportion of time.

4. (Amended) Scheduling means according to claim 1[, claims 2 or claims 3] further comprising [a] at least one further pipeline stage [(12)] receiving the requests not satisfied by the additional pipeline stage [(11)], [or a plurality of successive further pipeline stages, the] a first of the [successive] of at least one further pipeline stages receiving the requests not satisfied by the additional pipeline stage [(11)], and each of the other [successive] at least one further pipeline stages receiving the requests not satisfied by [the] a preceding further pipeline stage.